



Creating More Recreational Land

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Position Statement:

The State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council supports the proposed legislation allowing private landowners to make their property eligible for public use.

Position

It is the Position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council to enact a bill that allows private landowners the opportunity to make their property eligible for public use in exchange for a property tax break of \$2-9 per acre in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This tax break would be added to the Iowa Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) along with funding from the Pittman–Robertson Federal fund. The Liability is the same as South Dakota's land access program.

Rationale

The goal of this proposed legislation is to provide more land for the public, including Iowa's youth, for recreational purposes. [1] In Iowa, there were fewer paid hunting license holders in 2013 than in any year since 1958, according to statistics from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There were less than 230,000 Iowa hunting license holders in 2013, the lowest total in at least 55 years. In previous years, 2008 for example, that number was about 290,000. This is partially due to the fact that there is less public land available for use; Iowa is 49th in the amount of public land available. This bill would provide youth with better opportunities for recreational activities.

This proposed legislation has received support from Pheasants Forever.

Recommended Action

To give more opportunities for recreational activities, property owners can make their private land open to the public and allow use for horse trails, hiking trails, four-wheeling trails, fishing, and hunting. They would be able to choose multiple activities or just one; detailed descriptions must be made in regards to allowances and restrictions of people using the land. In return, the property owners would receive a tax break (\$2-9 per acre) on the land they open for use of the public.

Sources

1- "Youth hunting numbers continue to drop off in Iowa." Des Moines Register. Des Moines Register, 25 Oct. 2014. Web. 18 Dec. 2016.